

Rep. Joseph R. Pitts
Opening Statement
Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health
Hearing on “Helping Veterans with Emergency Medical Training Transition
to Civilian Service”
July 11, 2012

(As Prepared for Delivery)

We are here today to discuss H.R. 4124, the Veteran Emergency Medical Technician Support Act of 2012, which would give states demonstration grants to study how to better integrate military medics into civilian EMT jobs.

Emergency response is a crucial component of our healthcare system, as EMTs are often the first point of contact in a crisis situation and their care can make the difference between life and death.

Emergency response is even more crucial on the battlefield, where military medics respond to emergencies and provide care for the soldiers until a physician or other health professional can take over.

These soldiers trained as combat medics become very experienced dealing with massive trauma injuries and other complex health problems.

It seems that utilizing those with combat medic experience in our EMT workforce here at home would be good for the returning soldiers, good for the healthcare system, and good for patients.

Many areas throughout the U.S. are experiencing a shortage of EMTs, both paid and volunteers, and military medics could potentially fill those workforce gaps.

However, there are a number of issues keeping military medics from EMT employment. Most importantly are state licensing requirements, which can require duplicative training and education that is likely to be unnecessary for someone with significant experience.

There is a need to better understand the differences in military medic training versus traditional EMT training and bridge the gap between the two to make it easier for our returning soldiers to find jobs.

It is our hope that this bill would allow states to study this and streamline their EMT requirements for those returning from the military who have the experience so desperately needed in many communities.